

**NYN000206222 Gowanus Canal**

**Jeffrey Schiff** to Docket Superfund  
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06/30/2009 11:25 AM

Cc Dennis Munhall  
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Dear EPA: I am an artist who is one of the owners of 543 Union Street, a couple of buildings away from the Gowanus Canal. I am writing to comment on the possible Superfund status of the Canal.

I recently attended a meeting held by the Mayor's office which was clearly intended to dissuade the public from supporting the Superfund designation and encourage the Mayor's plan. The city speakers gave a very strong impression that they were trying to deceive the public with very weak arguing points. The EPA speaker (Walter ?) was far more persuasive. Because we in NYC have many reasons to distrust the Mayor based on his previous support of development plans gone awry (West Side Stadium, Nets Stadium, etc), I do not support City control of the Gowanus cleanup.

But the entire issue has been poorly explained to all of us. While the cleanup of the canal is of utmost importance, the question of who will be charged as Responsible Parties has been an utter mystery to all of us, and cause of considerable unease. The rumor is that we, who have had nothing to do with the polluting of the canal, may be charged bankrupting sums solely because we occupy nearby buildings (My building, for instance, has been artist studios for at least the last 20 years, but I have no knowledge of its use prior to that. The artist/tenants who banded together to buy the building roughly 5 years ago did not buy the liabilities of any previous business that occupied the building -- we only bought the real estate.). While I understand that businesses such as National Grid will likely be identified as RPs, can the EPA please explain how this works, and whether or not our fears of being charged are justified? This is one of those cases in which the government is feared as unapproachable and deaf to the people's voices, but (I hope) these fears are unjustified and could be eliminated with better communication. So I ask that you please explain who will be identified as RPs and on what basis.

Thanks.

Sincerely,  
Jeffrey Schiff, artist